

What is claimed is:

1. A method of processing an online purchase request from a customer to a vendor, comprising the steps of:

receiving a first online purchase request for a first item;

5 responsive to a first customer input, processing the first online purchase request using an express processing procedure that requires no further input by the customer to execute the online purchase request or as a shopping cart that requires a second customer input;

responsive to the second customer input, selectively processing the customer's shopping cart by the express processing procedure or by a normal checkout procedure;

10 converting the processed shopping cart or the processed first online purchase request into a first executable order.

2. The method of Claim 1, further including a step of enabling the customer to add at least one second item to the shopping cart.

3. The method of Claim 2, further including a step of enabling the customer to
15 create a list that includes the first and at least one second item, the list being persistently stored to enable later retrieval and use.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first item includes a uniquely identified and pre-stored list of goods and/or services.

5. The method of Claim 4, wherein the list includes an object, the object
20 including at least one of another list and item.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first online purchase request is received from an automated process configured to generate the first online purchase request at one of a selectable date and interval.

7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the customer identifies the first item using a unique identifier used by the customer and wherein the vendor maps the identifier used by the customer to a corresponding unique identifier used by the vendor.

8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the normal checkout procedure includes at least one of entering shipping information, entering billing information, validating pre-stored shipping information, validating pre-stored shipping information, confirming items to be purchased and choosing and/or confirming shipping methods.

9. The method of Claim 1, further including the steps of:

generating a first quote that includes the processed first online purchase request, the first quote including at least one of an identification of the first item and an identification of the shopping cart;

enabling modifications to be made to the first quote, the first quote persisting at least until a consolidation interval has elapsed, and

carrying out the converting step by converting the first quote into the first executable order when a quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified at least for the consolidation interval.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first quote generating step includes a step of generating an order status Web page that is viewable by the customer, the order status Web page displaying selected details of the first quote.

11. The method of Claim 10, wherein the order status Web page is configured to refer to the first quote as a pending order.

12. The method of Claim 9, wherein the enabling step allows at least one of the customer, a selected process and at least one authorized person to modify the first quote.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein the at least one authorized person includes the customer and a sales representative.

14. The method of Claim 9, wherein the quote conversion process is launched at a selectable interval.

5 15. The method of Claim 14, wherein the consolidation interval is measured from a time at which the quote conversion process is launched.

16. The method of Claim 9, wherein the quote conversion process runs continuously.

17. The method of Claim 1, further comprising the step of sending the first
10 executable order to an order fulfillment system.

18. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and
adding the second item to the first quote when the second online purchase request is
received before the first quote is converted into the first order.

15 19. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and
adding the second item to the first quote when the quote conversion process
determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time that is less than
the consolidation interval.

20 20. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and

generating a second quote that includes an identification of the second item and the retrieved information when the quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time greater than the consolidation interval.

21. The method of Claim 9, wherein the quote conversion process determines a difference between a time at which a last modification to the first quote was made and a current time and converts the quote to the first order when the difference is greater than the consolidation interval.

22. The method of Claim 9, further comprising the step of sending a message to the customer when the first quote is converted into the first order.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the message includes one of an email, an instant message, a voice message and a video message.

24. A computer system configured for processing an online purchase request from a customer to a vendor, comprising:

at least one processor;

at least one data storage device;

a plurality of processes spawned by said at least one processor, the processes including processing logic for:

receiving a first online purchase request for a first item;

responsive to a first customer input, selectively processing the first online purchase request using an express processing procedure that requires no further input by the customer to execute the online purchase request or as a shopping cart that requires a second customer input;

responsive to the second customer input, processing the customer's shopping cart by the express processing procedure or by a normal checkout procedure, and

converting the processed shopping cart or the processed first online purchase request into a first executable order.

5 25. The computer system of Claim 24, further including a process for carrying out a step of enabling the customer to add at least one second item to the shopping cart.

26. The computer system of Claim 24, further including a process for carrying out a step of enabling the customer to create a list that includes the first and at least one second item, the list being persistently stored to enable later retrieval and use.

10 27. The computer system of Claim 24, wherein the first item includes a uniquely identified and pre-stored list of goods and/or services.

28. The computer system of Claim 27, wherein the list includes an object, the object including at least one of another list and item.

15 29. The computer system of Claim 24, wherein the first online purchase request is received from an automated process configured to generate the first online purchase request at one of a selectable date and interval.

30. The computer system of Claim 24, wherein the customer identifies the first item using a unique identifier used by the customer and wherein the vendor maps the identifier used by the customer to a corresponding unique identifier used by the vendor.

20 31. The computer system of Claim 24, wherein the normal checkout procedure includes at least one of entering shipping information, entering billing information, validating pre-stored shipping information, validating pre-stored shipping information, confirming items to be purchased and choosing and/or confirming shipping methods.

32. The computer system of Claim 24, further including the processes for carrying out the steps of :

generating a first quote that includes the processed first online purchase request, the first quote including at least one of an identification of the first item and an identification of the shopping cart;

enabling modifications to be made to the first quote, the first quote persisting at least until a consolidation interval has elapsed, and

carrying out the converting step by converting the first quote into the first executable order when a quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified at least for the consolidation interval.

33. The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the first quote generating step includes a step of generating an order status Web page that is viewable by the customer, the order status Web page displaying selected details of the first quote.

34. The computer system of Claim 33, wherein the order status Web page is configured to refer to the first quote as a pending order.

35. The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the enabling step allows at least one of the customer, a selected process and at least one authorized person to modify the first quote.

36. The computer system of Claim 35, wherein the at least one authorized person includes the customer and a sales representative.

37. The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the quote conversion process is launched at a selectable interval.

38. The computer system of Claim 37, wherein the consolidation interval is measured from a time at which the quote conversion process is launched.

39. The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the quote conversion process runs continuously.

40. The computer system of Claim 24, further comprising the step of sending the first executable order to an order fulfillment system.

41. The computer system of Claim 32, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and
adding the second item to the first quote when the second online purchase request is received before the first quote is converted into the first order.

42. The computer system of Claim 32, further comprising the steps of:
receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and
adding the second item to the first quote when the quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time that is less than the consolidation interval.

43. The computer system of Claim 32, further comprising processes for carrying out the steps of:

receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and
generating a second quote that includes an identification of the second item and the retrieved information when the quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time greater than the consolidation interval.

44. The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the quote conversion process determines a difference between a time at which a last modification to the first quote was

made and a current time and converts the quote to the first order when the difference is greater than the consolidation interval.

45. The computer system of Claim 32, further comprising a process for carrying out the step of sending a message to the customer when the first quote is converted into the first order.

46. The computer system of Claim 45, wherein the message includes one of an email, an instant message, a voice message and a video message.

47. A machine-readable medium having data stored thereon representing sequences of instructions which, when executed by computing device, causes said computing device to process an online purchase request from a customer to a vendor by performing the steps of:

receiving a first online purchase request for a first item;

responsive to a first customer input, processing the first online purchase request using an express processing procedure that requires no further input by the customer to execute the online purchase request or as a shopping cart that requires a second customer input;

responsive to the second customer input, selectively processing the customer's shopping cart by the express processing procedure or by a normal checkout procedure, and

converting the processed shopping cart or the processed first online purchase request into a first executable order.

48. The medium of Claim 47, further including a step of enabling the customer to add at least one second item to the shopping cart.

49. The medium of Claim 47, further including a step of enabling the customer to create a list that includes the first and at least one second item, the list being persistently stored to enable later retrieval and use.

50. The medium of Claim 47, wherein the first item includes a uniquely identified
5 and pre-stored list of goods and/or services.

51. The medium of Claim 50, wherein the list includes an object, the object including at least one of another list and item.

52. The medium of Claim 47, wherein the first online purchase request is received from an automated process configured to generate the first online purchase request
10 at one of a selectable date and interval.

53. The medium of Claim 47, wherein the customer identifies the first item using a unique identifier used by the customer and wherein the vendor maps the identifier used by the customer to a corresponding unique identifier used by the vendor.

54. The medium of Claim 47, wherein the normal checkout procedure includes at
15 least one of entering shipping information, entering billing information, validating pre-stored shipping information, validating pre-stored shipping information, confirming items to be purchased and choosing and/or confirming shipping methods.

55. The medium of Claim 47, further including the steps of:
generating a first quote that includes the processed first online purchase request, the
20 first quote including at least one of an identification of the first item and an identification of the shopping cart;

enabling modifications to be made to the first quote, the first quote persisting at least until a consolidation interval has elapsed, and

carrying out the converting step by converting the first quote into the first executable order when a quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified at least for the consolidation interval.

56. The medium of Claim 55, wherein the first quote generating step includes a step of generating an order status Web page that is viewable by the customer, the order status Web page displaying selected details of the first quote.

57. The medium of Claim 56, wherein the order status Web page is configured to refer to the first quote as a pending order.

58. The medium of Claim 55, wherein the enabling step allows at least one of the customer, a selected process and at least one authorized person to modify the first quote.

59. The medium of Claim 58, wherein the at least one authorized person includes the customer and a sales representative.

60. The medium of Claim 55, wherein the quote conversion process is launched at a selectable interval.

61. The medium of Claim 60, wherein the consolidation interval is measured from a time at which the quote conversion process is launched.

62. The medium of Claim 55, wherein the quote conversion process runs continuously.

63. The medium of Claim 47, further comprising the step of sending the first executable order to an order fulfillment system.

64. The medium of Claim 47, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and

adding the second item to the first quote when the second online purchase request is received before the first quote is converted into the first order.

65. The medium of Claim 47, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and

5 adding the second item to the first quote when the quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time that is less than the consolidation interval.

66. The medium of Claim 47, further comprising the steps of:

receiving a second online purchase request for a second item from the customer, and

10 generating a second quote that includes an identification of the second item and the retrieved information when the quote conversion process determines that the first quote has remained unmodified for a period of time greater than the consolidation interval.

15 67. The medium of Claim 47, wherein the quote conversion process determines a difference between a time at which a last modification to the first quote was made and a current time and converts the quote to the first order when the difference is greater than the consolidation interval.

68. The medium of Claim 47, further comprising the step of sending a message to the customer when the first quote is converted into the first order.

20 69. The medium of Claim 68, wherein the message includes one of an email, an instant message, a voice message and a video message.